

CalFresh Program Changes

State Utility Assistance Subsidy (SUAS)

Frequently Asked Questions

The State Utility Assistance Subsidy (SUAS) program provides \$20.01 cash benefits to those CalFresh households that did not qualify to receive the Standard Utility Allowance (SUA) deduction because the household did not report paying for heating or cooling utility costs separate from their shelter cost. The SUAS payment (\$20.01) is only to be provided to those households who will receive additional CalFresh benefits as a result of receiving the SUA deduction based on SUAS payment, or will make the household eligible to CalFresh benefits, and are not already receiving maximum benefit amount for their household size.



House Resolution (H.R.) 1, also known as the One Big Beautiful Bill Act, was signed into law on July 4, 2025. H.R. 1 makes significant changes to the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), locally known as the CalFresh Program. H.R. 1 changes will be implemented at different times, upon CDSS policy release and system automation.

Beginning November 1, 2025, the SUAS payment (\$20.01) will be limited to only households that meet the following criteria as of their application date or for current households as of their renewal:

1. Are not eligible for the SUA deduction as they are not paying for heating or cooling utility expenses separate from their shelter cost; and
2. Are not already receiving the maximum CalFresh allotment for their household size; and
3. Contain elderly (60 years of age and older) or disabled household member.

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

1. Who will be eligible for SUAS payment?

SUAS payment is limited to CalFresh households that contain an elderly or disabled member, not otherwise eligible for the SUA deduction, not already receiving the maximum CalFresh allotment for their household size, and would receive an increase in CalFresh benefits.

2. What criteria would make a CalFresh household qualify for SUAS payment?

Households must meet the following:

- contain an elderly member and/or member with a disability,
- do not have heating or cooling utility bills separate from their rent/mortgage,
- are not already getting the maximum CalFresh benefit for their household size, and
- receiving SUAS payment/SUA deduction will increase the household's CalFresh benefits.

3. What is Standard Utility Allowance (SUA)? Do you have to submit heating expenses or cooling expenses like LADWP for CalFresh?

SUA is the Standard Utility Allowance deduction that is allowed to a household that incurs heating or cooling expenses separate from their shelter expense (rent/mortgage). Verifications are not required unless there is conflicting information provided in the application, or if it is questionable.

4. If I am already receiving the Homeless Household Shelter Allowance (HSSA), am I eligible for the SUAS payment?

No, you are not eligible for the SUAS payment if you are already receiving an increased benefit due to the Homeless Household Shelter Allowance. Our staff will always evaluate each household's entitlement for SUAS or HSSA and will allow whichever benefits the household.

5. What effect can this change have on my CalFresh benefits?

If you are receiving CalFresh currently (before Nov. 1, 2025) and your household does not contain an elderly and/or disabled member and are receiving the SUA deduction based on SUAS payment, your benefits may be reduced or discontinued at your renewal.

6. When will this change be effective?

This policy change will apply to CalFresh households at different times.

- For new households applying to CalFresh benefits, the SUAS policy change took effect starting November 1, 2025.
- For ongoing/current cases, this change will take effect at your next Renewal.
- CalFresh households certified for 24 or 36 months will be evaluated for SUAS payment/SUA deduction allowance every 12 months from the time the last SUAS payment of \$20.01 was issued.

7. If a CalFresh household includes an elderly or disabled member who is ineligible or excluded for CalFresh, does that still qualify the household for a SUAS payment?

Yes, if the household includes an elderly or disabled individual who is ineligible or excluded household member for CalFresh, the household may qualify for SUA deduction and SUAS payment if all other eligibility criteria is met.

8. How much is the SUAS payment amount? What type of purchases can I use the SUAS payment towards?

The SUAS payment amount is \$20.01. The SUAS payment can be used for any food or cash purchases.

9. How often is the SUAS payment issued, if eligible?

The SUAS payment is issued once every 12 months to eligible CalFresh households. If a case is discontinued and the household reapplies and is eligible to SUA deduction based on SUAS payment, the household may receive another SUAS payment.

10. How do I receive the SUAS payment?

The SUAS cash payment is issued to your Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) account.

11. Who will be eligible for SUAS payment?

SUAS payment is limited to CalFresh households that contain an elderly or disabled member, not otherwise eligible for the SUA deduction, and not already receiving the maximum CalFresh allotment for their household size.

12. Does H.R. 1 affect benefits for participants 65 years and older?

Due to H.R. 1 SUAS policy change that took effect on November 1, 2025, the SUAS payment that provides \$20.01 annually will be limited to only CalFresh households that contain an elderly (60 year of age or older) or disabled household member, are not eligible for SUA deduction because they do not pay heating or cooling separate from their rent/mortgage, and they are not receiving the maximum CF allotment for their household size.

13. Is the SUAS payment subject to over-issuance?

The SUAS \$20.01 payment is not included in the CalFresh budget for benefit determination and thus, will not be included to compute over-issuances.

14. Who is considered disabled in the CalFresh program?

Per CalFresh policy, an individual is considered disabled in the CalFresh program if any of the following applies

- Receives Supplemental Security Income (SSI) under Title XVI or disability on blindness under Title II (Social Security Disability Insurance Program) of the Social Security Act (SSA);
- Receives interim assistance benefits pending receipt of SSI, if the eligibility to receive those benefits is based upon disability or blindness criteria which are the least as stringent as those used under Title XVI of the SSA;
- Receives disability retirement benefits from a government agency because of a disability considered permanent under Section 221(i) of the SSA;

- Receives disability-related medical assistance under Title XIX (Medi-Cal) of the SSA;
- Is a veteran with a service-connected or nonservice-connected disability rated by the Veteran's Administration (VA) as total or paid as total by the VA under Title 38 of the United States Code;
- Is a veteran considered by the VA to be in need of regular aid and attendance or permanently housebound under Title 38 of the United States Code;
- Is a surviving spouse of a veteran and considered by the VA to be in need of regular aid and attendance or permanently housebound or a surviving child of a veteran and considered by the VA to be permanently incapable of self-support under Title 38 of the United States Code;
- Is a surviving spouse or surviving child of a veteran and considered by the VA to be entitled to compensation for a service-connected death or pension benefits for a nonservice-connected death under Title 38 of the United States Code and has a disability considered permanent under Section 221(i) of the Social Security Act. "Entitled" as used in this definition refers to those veterans' surviving spouses and surviving children who are receiving the compensation or pension benefits stated or have been approved for such payments, but are not yet receiving them; or,
- Receives an annuity payment under Section 2(a)(1)(iv) of the Railroad Retirement Act of 1974 and is determined to be eligible to receive Medicare by the Railroad Retirement Board; or Section 2(a)(1)(v) of the Railroad Retirement Act of 1974 and is determined to be disabled based upon the criteria used under Title XVI of the Social Security Act.
- Determined to be Needs Special Assistance (NSA) for General Relief (GR) Program.